

JAMES D. MAUSETH



In 2017, the California Botanical Society is pleased to dedicate the 64th volume of *Madroño* to Dr. James (Jim) D. Mauseth, author, renowned plant anatomist, celebrated teacher, and botany professor at the University of Texas at Austin (UT).

In the introduction to the sixth edition of *Botany: An Introduction to Plant Biology*, Jim writes: “At this point in human history, we must look at plants in a new way, we must analyze the interactions of plants and people more carefully than ever before.” For forty-one years, Jim has devoted his life to training students to do just that.

Jim Mauseth was born in 1948 in eastern Washington. He grew up surrounded by plants on his family farm and the nearby sagebrush scrub. He received a bachelor’s degree and Ph.D. from the University of Washington, Seattle where he studied the growth and development of cacti. However, he didn’t initially go to grad school to study cacti. It took a serendipitous field trip to Anza Borrego for Jim to meet and fall in love with his first cactus. Since then he’s tackled the most fundamental questions about how plants adapt to extreme environments.

Jim became a professor at UT in 1975, and after forty-one years of incredible service, Jim retired this year. Much of his career has concentrated on studying plants with highly modified forms, such as cacti and parasitic plants. To

accomplish his research, Jim traveled extensively throughout Central and South America to study cactus diversification. He chronicled these adventures in a delightful book: *A Cactus Odyssey: Journeys in the Wilds of Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina* (Timber Press, 2002) where he brought the tribulations and excitement of botanical discovery to the masses.

Jim has made a career out of looking closely at plants. His anatomical studies have elucidated many new and poorly understood complexities about how plants work. His prolific publications include over seventy-five papers related to plant form. He also authored nearly thirty articles about plants and cacti for domestic and international societies. We are all indebted to the careful observations that Jim has contributed to our understanding of plant anatomy.

During his time at UT, Jim authored several renowned and widely used textbooks. His *Botany: An Introduction to Plant Biology* is now in its 6th edition (Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2016), and *Plant Anatomy* (Blackburn Press, 2008) still continues to serve upper division undergraduate courses throughout North America. All of Jim’s time traveling internationally and teaching at UT have given him a unique understanding of how dependent human life is on plants. To that end, Jim wrote *Plants and People* (Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2012), an ethnobotany and economic



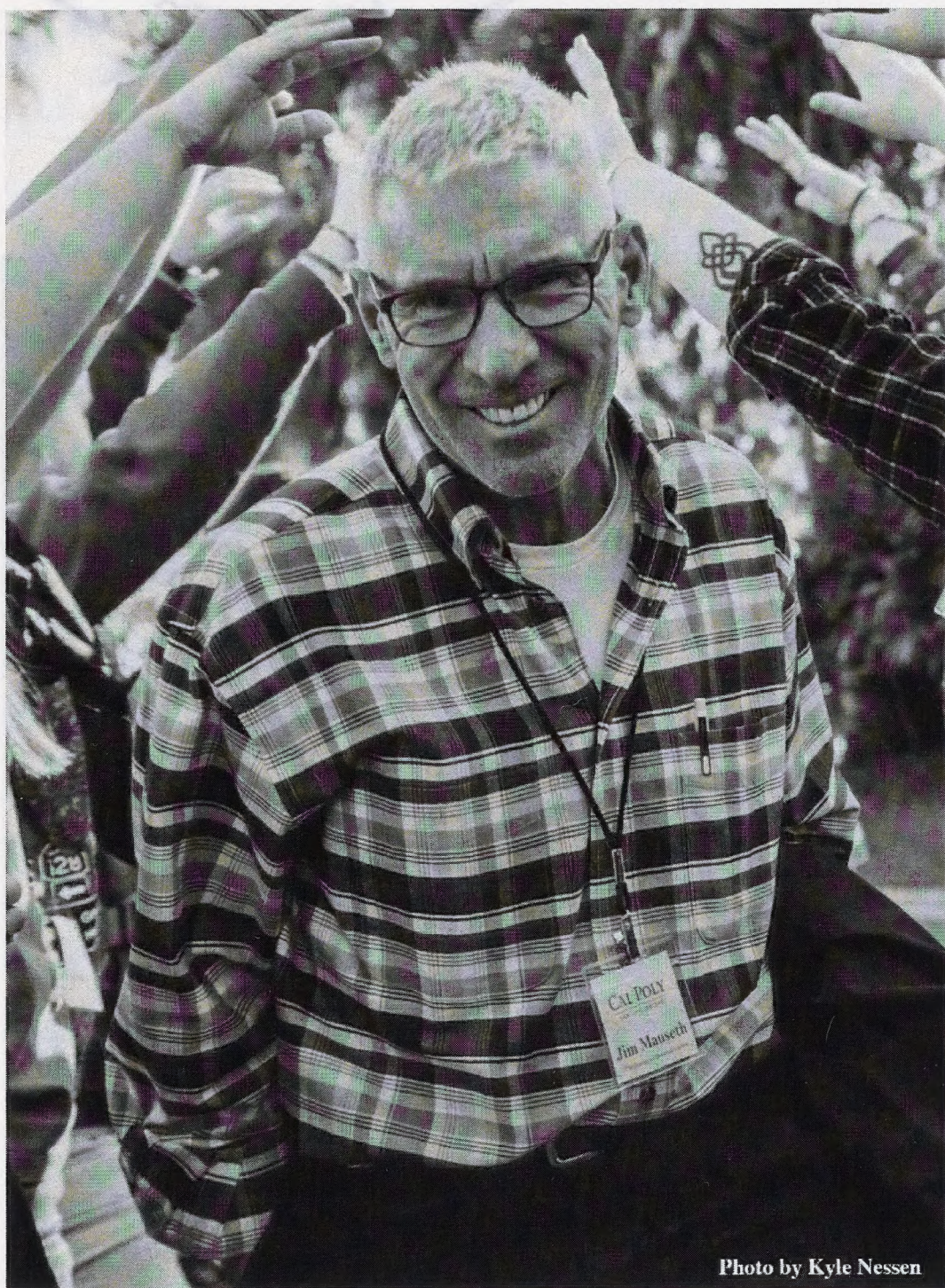


Photo by Kyle Nessen

botany textbook designed to bring science and the importance of plants in human cultures to non-science majors. Jim has a unique talent for making textbook science writing interesting to wide audiences.

Jim has impacted countless students in his own courses at UT. He's taught Introductory Botany and Plant Anatomy nearly every year since 1975, as well as Plant Biotechnology, Plant Morphogenesis, and Structure and Function of Organisms. Jim has also taught extensively throughout Latin America with courses in Spanish including Plant Anatomy and Cacti Ecology and Evolution. Jim has also done his part in training the next generation of plant anatomists. His many graduate students have embarked on studies of *Mammillaria* Haw., *Physcomitrium* (Brid.) Brid., the Balanophoraceae, the Caryophyllales, and of course cacti in general.

Jim is really at his best in front of a group of students, and the students hang on every word. At any moment Jim can deliver an impromptu lecture on a wide range of topics. Jim is funny, sharp, and deeply caring. He's inspired hundreds, if not thousands, of students to take an interest in plant biology, and he continues to do so even in retirement. We recently had the honor of teaching with him during a short course on cacti at the Huntington Botanical Gardens and Library, in Pasadena, California. It was a humbling experience to watch him so masterfully interact with students, from teaching them about deep philosophical issues associated with the scientific method, to dissecting cacti, to explaining how a microtome works. Jim's love of plants and scientific discovery is infectious.

Jim currently serves as the editor of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America's journal, *Haseltonia*, which features peer-reviewed articles about all aspects of cacti, succulents, and their environs. He's been a contributing member of the Cactus and Succulent Societies of America and Great Britain, the International Association for Wood Anatomists, and the Botanical Society of America, just to name a few. He's served on the board of directors of the Texas Botanical Garden Society since 1995, been the associate editor of the *American Journal of Botany*, and on the editorial board of the *Plant Science Bulletin*. Jim has exemplified all that one could hope for as a productive scientist, gifted teacher, and supportive colleague.

In his spare time, Jim is an avid cyclist and enjoys the pace of life on a bicycle, where he can look at the plants as he goes. He's ridden all over the U.S. and Europe, and hopefully many more bike trips are in his future retirement plans.

Jim ends the preface of his *Botany* textbook with "My ultimate goal is to teach about life in general...to help the reader to more fully understand human biology, indeed to understand all of biology. No organism exists isolated from others: instead we all share one biology that encompasses all organisms. We are all in this together." Thank you Jim, from your many students and colleagues, for your important lifelong work, inspirational teaching, and for continuing to remind us to look closely at the botanical wonders surrounding us.

—JENN YOST AND MATT RITTER, Biological Sciences Department, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407